



Meeting with Local NGOs to Increase the Awareness of Maternal and Child Health Services in Local Communities in Baghdad

Iraq's maternal and infant mortality rates are more than twice the 2015 target for Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5. As primary health care clinics are often the first line of care for women and children, collaboration between health centers and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Iraq is essential. By addressing the challenges women face when accessing community level maternal and child health services, health outcomes will be greatly improved, helping Iraq to achieve the maternal and child health focused 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

PHCPI

USAID's Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI) works in collaboration with Iraq's Ministry of Health (MOH) to strengthen the delivery of primary health care services throughout the country. PHCPI focuses on access to maternal and child health services and is working with the Government of Iraq to improve the standards and quality of 36 "model" clinics that will serve as examples for further national replication by the MOH.

Awareness Meeting

To further the goals of the PHCPI and move towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, PHCPI hosted a meeting on January 5, 2014 that focused on the use of Awareness Workshops to involve NGOs in the PHCPI to help improve access to maternal and child health services in Baghdad.



Different NGOs in Baghdad were represented at the meeting held on January 5th, 2014.

The meeting included participants from different Baghdad-based NGOs seeking to improve access to care for women. Women for Women, Muslim Aid, Iraqi Youth League, Iraqi Association against Tuberculosis and Pulmonology, and Kawther Al-Rahman Foundation for Orphans' Care were all in attendance.

Topics addressed at the meeting included:

- PHCPI model clinics
- Introduction of the Behavior Change Communication Strategy
- Maternal and Child Health media-based messages and community outreach activities, such as: the importance of early antenatal care visits, signs of labor, postnatal care, family planning, the importance of breast feeding, and danger signs during pregnancy



PHCPI/BCC Advisor is providing an overview about BCC strategy during the Awareness Workshop Meeting

Topics addressed at the meeting included:

- Patient's Rights
- Volunteer training on the Awareness Workshop

Dr. Cornelis 'Kees' Rietveld opened by welcoming the participants and explaining the purpose of the meeting. Through presentations, small working groups, and discussions, the participants were able to develop recommendations for a work plan that will help NGOs to better engage and work with PHCCs in the common goal of quality and accessible care for women and children.

Work Plan Recommendations:

1. NGOs will nominate 4 to 5 volunteers from their organization to participate in the Awareness Workshop
2. NGOs will submit a list of PHCCs in their targeted communities
3. The first Awareness Workshop will be conducted in February 2014
4. NGOs will conduct the Awareness Workshops at the selected PHCCs along with the project coordinators and the Local Health Committees (LHCs)

Thanks to the meeting, NGOs recognize the impact collaboration with primary health care centers will have on access to care at the community level. Through a stronger more cohesive relationship between NGOs and PHCCs, USAID's Primary Health Care Project in Iraq will continue to increase access to quality health care for women and children, resulting in a reduction of maternal and infant mortality.